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<b>State Bar Court of California</b> <b>Hearing Department</b> <b>Los Angeles</b> <b>ACTUAL SUSPENSION</b>		
<b>Counsel For The State Bar</b>  Ashod Mooradian Deputy Trial Counsel 1149 S. Hill Street Los Angeles, CA 90015 (213) 765-1004  Bar # 194283	Case Number(s): 12-O-13220	For Court use only  <div style="text-align: center;"> <b>PUBLIC MATTER</b>   <b>FILED</b>           DEC 06 2012          STATE BAR COURT          CLERK'S OFFICE          LOS ANGELES       </div>
<b>In Pro Per Respondent</b>  Stephen Douglas Zuckerman 10390 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1610 Los Angeles, CA 90024 (310) 724-8174  Bar # 47329	Submitted to: <b>Assigned Judge</b>  STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION AND ORDER APPROVING  <b>ACTUAL SUSPENSION</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> PREVIOUS STIPULATION REJECTED	
<b>In the Matter of:</b> <b>STEPHEN DOUGLAS ZUCKERMAN</b>  Bar # 47329  A Member of the State Bar of California (Respondent)		

**Note: All information required by this form and any additional information which cannot be provided in the space provided, must be set forth in an attachment to this stipulation under specific headings, e.g., "Facts," "Dismissals," "Conclusions of Law," "Supporting Authority," etc.**

#### **A. Parties' Acknowledgments:**

- (1) Respondent is a member of the State Bar of California, admitted July 16, 1970.
- (2) The parties agree to be bound by the factual stipulations contained herein even if conclusions of law or disposition are rejected or changed by the Supreme Court.
- (3) All investigations or proceedings listed by case number in the caption of this stipulation are entirely resolved by this stipulation and are deemed consolidated. Dismissed charge(s)/count(s) are listed under "Dismissals." The stipulation consists of 11 pages, not including the order.
- (4) A statement of acts or omissions acknowledged by Respondent as cause or causes for discipline is included under "Facts."

(Effective January 1, 2011)



- (5) Conclusions of law, drawn from and specifically referring to the facts are also included under "Conclusions of Law".
- (6) The parties must include supporting authority for the recommended level of discipline under the heading "Supporting Authority."
- (7) No more than 30 days prior to the filing of this stipulation, Respondent has been advised in writing of any pending investigation/proceeding not resolved by this stipulation, except for criminal investigations.
- (8) Payment of Disciplinary Costs—Respondent acknowledges the provisions of Bus. & Prof. Code §§6086.10 & 6140.7. (Check one option only):
  - ☐ Until costs are paid in full, Respondent will remain actually suspended from the practice of law unless relief is obtained per rule 5.130, Rules of Procedure.
  - ☒ Costs are to be paid in equal amounts prior to February 1 for the following membership years: two billing cycles following the effective date of the Supreme Court order. (Hardship, special circumstances or other good cause per rule 5.132, Rules of Procedure.) If Respondent fails to pay any installment as described above, or as may be modified by the State Bar Court, the remaining balance is due and payable immediately.
  - ☐ Costs are waived in part as set forth in a separate attachment entitled "Partial Waiver of Costs".
  - ☐ Costs are entirely waived.

**B. Aggravating Circumstances [for definition, see Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct, standard 1.2(b)]. Facts supporting aggravating circumstances are required.**

- (1) ☐ **Prior record of discipline** [see standard 1.2(f)]
  - (a) ☐ State Bar Court case # of prior case
  - (b) ☐ Date prior discipline effective
  - (c) ☐ Rules of Professional Conduct/ State Bar Act violations:
  - (d) ☐ Degree of prior discipline
  - (e) ☐ If Respondent has two or more incidents of prior discipline, use space provided below.
- (2) ☐ **Dishonesty:** Respondent's misconduct was surrounded by or followed by bad faith, dishonesty, concealment, overreaching or other violations of the State Bar Act or Rules of Professional Conduct.
- (3) ☐ **Trust Violation:** Trust funds or property were involved and Respondent refused or was unable to account to the client or person who was the object of the misconduct for improper conduct toward said funds or property.
- (4) ☐ **Harm:** Respondent's misconduct harmed significantly a client, the public or the administration of justice.
- (5) ☐ **Indifference:** Respondent demonstrated indifference toward rectification of or atonement for the consequences of his or her misconduct.

- (6) ☐ **Lack of Cooperation:** Respondent displayed a lack of candor and cooperation to victims of his/her misconduct or to the State Bar during disciplinary investigation or proceedings.
- (7) ☐ **Multiple/Pattern of Misconduct:** Respondent's current misconduct evidences multiple acts of wrongdoing or demonstrates a pattern of misconduct.
- (8) ☒ **No aggravating circumstances** are involved.

**Additional aggravating circumstances:**

None.

**C. Mitigating Circumstances [see standard 1.2(e)]. Facts supporting mitigating circumstances are required.**

- (1) ☐ **No Prior Discipline:** Respondent has no prior record of discipline over many years of practice coupled with present misconduct which is not deemed serious.
- (2) ☐ **No Harm:** Respondent did not harm the client or person who was the object of the misconduct.
- (3) ☐ **Candor/Cooperation:** Respondent displayed spontaneous candor and cooperation with the victims of his/her misconduct and to the State Bar during disciplinary investigation and proceedings.
- (4) ☐ **Remorse:** Respondent promptly took objective steps spontaneously demonstrating remorse and recognition of the wrongdoing, which steps were designed to timely atone for any consequences of his/her misconduct.
- (5) ☐ **Restitution:** Respondent paid \$ \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ in restitution to \_\_\_\_\_ without the threat or force of disciplinary, civil or criminal proceedings.
- (6) ☐ **Delay:** These disciplinary proceedings were excessively delayed. The delay is not attributable to Respondent and the delay prejudiced him/her.
- (7) ☐ **Good Faith:** Respondent acted in good faith.
- (8) ☐ **Emotional/Physical Difficulties:** At the time of the stipulated act or acts of professional misconduct Respondent suffered extreme emotional difficulties or physical disabilities which expert testimony would establish was directly responsible for the misconduct. The difficulties or disabilities were not the product of any illegal conduct by the member, such as illegal drug or substance abuse, and Respondent no longer suffers from such difficulties or disabilities.
- (9) ☐ **Severe Financial Stress:** At the time of the misconduct, Respondent suffered from severe financial stress which resulted from circumstances not reasonably foreseeable or which were beyond his/her control and which were directly responsible for the misconduct.
- (10) ☐ **Family Problems:** At the time of the misconduct, Respondent suffered extreme difficulties in his/her personal life which were other than emotional or physical in nature.
- (11) ☐ **Good Character:** Respondent's good character is attested to by a wide range of references in the legal and general communities who are aware of the full extent of his/her misconduct.
- (12) ☐ **Rehabilitation:** Considerable time has passed since the acts of professional misconduct occurred followed by convincing proof of subsequent rehabilitation.

- (13) ☐ **No mitigating circumstances** are involved.

**Additional mitigating circumstances:**

See Attachment at pages 7-8.

**D. Discipline:**

- (1) ☒ **Stayed Suspension:**

- (a) ☒ Respondent must be suspended from the practice of law for a period of one (1) year.
- i. ☐ and until Respondent shows proof satisfactory to the State Bar Court of rehabilitation and present fitness to practice and present learning and ability in the law pursuant to standard 1.4(c)(ii) Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct.
- ii. ☐ and until Respondent pays restitution as set forth in the Financial Conditions form attached to this stipulation.
- iii. ☐ and until Respondent does the following:
- (b) ☒ The above-referenced suspension is stayed.

- (2) ☒ **Probation:**

Respondent must be placed on probation for a period of two (2) years, which will commence upon the effective date of the Supreme Court order in this matter. (See rule 9.18, California Rules of Court)

- (3) ☒ **Actual Suspension:**

- (a) ☒ Respondent must be actually suspended from the practice of law in the State of California for a period of sixty (60) days.
- i. ☐ and until Respondent shows proof satisfactory to the State Bar Court of rehabilitation and present fitness to practice and present learning and ability in the law pursuant to standard 1.4(c)(ii), Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct
- ii. ☐ and until Respondent pays restitution as set forth in the Financial Conditions form attached to this stipulation.
- iii. ☐ and until Respondent does the following:

**E. Additional Conditions of Probation:**

- (1) ☐ If Respondent is actually suspended for two years or more, he/she must remain actually suspended until he/she proves to the State Bar Court his/her rehabilitation, fitness to practice, and learning and ability in the general law, pursuant to standard 1.4(c)(ii), Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct.
- (2) ☒ During the probation period, Respondent must comply with the provisions of the State Bar Act and Rules of Professional Conduct.
- (3) ☒ Within ten (10) days of any change, Respondent must report to the Membership Records Office of the State Bar and to the Office of Probation of the State Bar of California ("Office of Probation"), all changes of

information, including current office address and telephone number, or other address for State Bar purposes, as prescribed by section 6002.1 of the Business and Professions Code.

- (4) ☒ Within thirty (30) days from the effective date of discipline, Respondent must contact the Office of Probation and schedule a meeting with Respondent's assigned probation deputy to discuss these terms and conditions of probation. Upon the direction of the Office of Probation, Respondent must meet with the probation deputy either in-person or by telephone. During the period of probation, Respondent must promptly meet with the probation deputy as directed and upon request.
- (5) ☒ Respondent must submit written quarterly reports to the Office of Probation on each January 10, April 10, July 10, and October 10 of the period of probation. Under penalty of perjury, Respondent must state whether Respondent has complied with the State Bar Act, the Rules of Professional Conduct, and all conditions of probation during the preceding calendar quarter. Respondent must also state whether there are any proceedings pending against him or her in the State Bar Court and if so, the case number and current status of that proceeding. If the first report would cover less than 30 days, that report must be submitted on the next quarter date, and cover the extended period.

In addition to all quarterly reports, a final report, containing the same information, is due no earlier than twenty (20) days before the last day of the period of probation and no later than the last day of probation.

- (6) ☐ Respondent must be assigned a probation monitor. Respondent must promptly review the terms and conditions of probation with the probation monitor to establish a manner and schedule of compliance. During the period of probation, Respondent must furnish to the monitor such reports as may be requested, in addition to the quarterly reports required to be submitted to the Office of Probation. Respondent must cooperate fully with the probation monitor.
- (7) ☒ Subject to assertion of applicable privileges, Respondent must answer fully, promptly and truthfully any inquiries of the Office of Probation and any probation monitor assigned under these conditions which are directed to Respondent personally or in writing relating to whether Respondent is complying or has complied with the probation conditions.
- (8) ☒ Within one (1) year of the effective date of the discipline herein, Respondent must provide to the Office of Probation satisfactory proof of attendance at a session of the Ethics School, and passage of the test given at the end of that session.
- ☐ No Ethics School recommended. Reason: .
- (9) ☐ Respondent must comply with all conditions of probation imposed in the underlying criminal matter and must so declare under penalty of perjury in conjunction with any quarterly report to be filed with the Office of Probation.
- (10) ☐ The following conditions are attached hereto and incorporated:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Substance Abuse Conditions | <input type="checkbox"/> Law Office Management Conditions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Conditions         | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Conditions             |

#### F. Other Conditions Negotiated by the Parties:

- (1) ☒ **Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination:** Respondent must provide proof of passage of the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination ("MPRE"), administered by the National Conference of Bar Examiners, to the Office of Probation during the period of actual suspension or within one year, whichever period is longer. **Failure to pass the MPRE results in actual suspension without further hearing until passage. But see rule 9.10(b), California Rules of Court, and rule 5.162(A) & (E), Rules of Procedure.**

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☐ No MPRE recommended. Reason:

- (2) ☐ **Rule 9.20, California Rules of Court:** Respondent must comply with the requirements of rule 9.20, California Rules of Court, and perform the acts specified in subdivisions (a) and (c) of that rule within 30 and 40 calendar days, respectively, after the effective date of the Supreme Court's Order in this matter.
- (3) ☐ **Conditional Rule 9.20, California Rules of Court:** If Respondent remains actually suspended for 90 days or more, he/she must comply with the requirements of rule 9.20, California Rules of Court, and perform the acts specified in subdivisions (a) and (c) of that rule within 120 and 130 calendar days, respectively, after the effective date of the Supreme Court's Order in this matter.
- (4) ☐ **Credit for Interim Suspension [conviction referral cases only]:** Respondent will be credited for the period of his/her interim suspension toward the stipulated period of actual suspension. Date of commencement of interim suspension:
- (5) ☐ **Other Conditions:**

**ATTACHMENT TO**  
**STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION**

IN THE MATTER OF:                      STEPHEN DOUGLAS ZUCKERMAN

CASE NUMBER(S):                      12-O-13220

**FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW.**

Respondent admits that the following facts are true and that he is culpable of violations of the specified statutes and/or Rules of Professional Conduct.

**Case No. 12-O-13220 (State Bar Investigation)**

**FACTS:**

1. In order to remain as an active member of the State Bar, Respondent was required to complete 25 hours of minimum continuing legal education ("MCLE") during the period of February 1, 2008, through January 31, 2011 (the "compliance period").
2. On March 18, 2011, Respondent reported to the State Bar, under penalty of perjury, that he was in compliance with the MCLE requirements, and, in particular, that he had completed his MCLE during the compliance period.
3. In fact, Respondent had not completed any MCLE courses within the compliance period.
4. When Respondent reported to the State Bar that he was in compliance with the MCLE requirements, Respondent knew or was grossly negligent in not knowing that he had not completed the MCLE during the compliance period as required.
5. Respondent took additional MCLE courses necessary to come into compliance after being contacted by Membership Services regarding an audit of MCLE compliance. Respondent timely complied with the audit.

**CONCLUSION OF LAW:**

6. By reporting to the State Bar, under penalty of perjury, that he was in compliance with the MCLE requirements when he knew or was grossly negligent in not knowing that he was not in compliance with the MCLE requirements, Respondent intentionally or by gross negligence committed an act involving moral turpitude, dishonesty and corruption in wilful violation of Business and Professions Code, section 6106.

**ADDITIONAL FACTS RE MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES.**

Although the misconduct is serious, Respondent has no prior record of discipline in 42 years of practice. See Std. 1.2(e)(i) and *In The Matter of Stamper* (Rev. Dept. 1990) 1 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 96, fn 13; and *In the Matter of Riordan* (Rev. Dept. 2007) 5 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr 41, 49.

In addition, Respondent cooperated in the investigation of this case and is further cooperating by entering into this Stipulation to resolve this matter before the filing of disciplinary charges. See *In the Matter of Riordan* (Review Dept. 2007) 5 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 41.

#### **AUTHORITIES SUPPORTING DISCIPLINE.**

The Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct provide a “process of fixing discipline” pursuant to a set of written principles to “better discharge the purposes of attorney discipline as announced by the Supreme Court.” (Rules Proc. of State Bar, tit. IV, Stds. for Atty. Sanctions for Prof. Misconduct, Introduction (all further references to standards are to this source).) The primary purposes of disciplinary proceedings and of the sanctions imposed are “the protection of the public, the courts and the legal profession; the maintenance of high professional standards by attorneys and the preservation of public confidence in the legal profession.” (*In re Morse* (1995) 11 Cal.4<sup>th</sup> 184, 205; std 1.3.)

Although not binding, the standards are entitled to “great weight” and should be followed “whenever possible” in determining level of discipline. (*In re Silvertown* (2005) 36 Cal.4<sup>th</sup> 81, 92, quoting *In re Brown* (1995) 12 Cal.4<sup>th</sup> 205, 220 and *In re Young* (1989) 49 Cal.3d 257, 267, fn. 11.) Adherence to the standards in the great majority of cases serves the valuable purpose of eliminating disparity and assuring consistency, that is, the imposition of similar attorney discipline for instances of similar attorney misconduct. (*In re Naney* (1990) 51 Cal.3d 186, 190.) Any discipline recommendation different from that set forth in the applicable standards should clearly explain the reasons for the deviation. (*Blair v. State Bar* (1989) 49 Cal.3d 762, 776, fn. 5.)

Standard 2.3 provides that culpability of “...a member of an act of moral turpitude, fraud, or intentional dishonesty toward a court, client or another person or of concealment of a material fact to a court, client or another person shall result in actual suspension or disbarment depending upon the extent to which the victim of the misconduct is harmed or misled and depending upon the magnitude of the act of misconduct and the degree to which it relates to the member's acts within the practice of law.”

Whether made through gross negligence or intentional dishonesty, Respondent’s false statement regarding his MCLE compliance, under penalty of perjury, is serious and constitutes an act of dishonesty directly relating to the practice of law.

Although there is no California case addressing an attorney’s misrepresentation concerning MCLE compliance, we can look to other states for guidance. *In the Matter of Diggs* (S.C. 2001) 544 S.E.2d 628, details the importance of continuing legal education and of attorneys’ honesty in reporting their MCLE compliance.

“Truthful representations on CLE compliance reports are essential to the successful operation of the South Carolina CLE program. Our CLE program operates on an honor system. The Commission does not check the accuracy of every attorney’s CLE compliance report. ... In order for the CLE program to be successful, and provide the public with competent, educated attorneys, South Carolina attorneys must complete the required number of CLE hours.” (*Id.* at 631-632.)

These policy reasons for requiring attorneys to take continuing legal education apply to California.



Respondent's misconduct is analogous to *Drociak v. State Bar*, (Cal. 1991) 52 Cal. 3d 1085. In *Drociak*, the attorney used his client's presigned verification to respond to discovery without first consulting with his client to ensure the veracity of assertions of fact in the discovery responses in violation of Business and Professions Code sections 6106 and 6068(d), and former rule 7-105(1). The attorney, who had no prior record of discipline in 25 years of practice, received a 30-day actual suspension. In imposing the 30-day actual suspension, the Supreme Court specifically cited to Standard 2.3, noting that "The Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct ... make violation of section 6106 punishable by disbarment or actual suspension" and further noted that "[p]etitioner's prior 'clean' record is commendable, but it does not render the recommended 30-day actual suspension inappropriate." (*Id.* at 1090-1091.)

See also: *Bach v. State Bar*, 43 Cal. 3d 848 (Cal. 1987) [attorney, who had previously been publically reproved and who made false statements to a court about events that had occurred at a hearing before another judge and about receiving a court order, received an actual suspension of 60 days after the Supreme Court found the behavior involved moral turpitude.]

Although Respondent's misconduct does not involve a misrepresentation to a court, it is clearly behavior that undermines the public's confidence in the legal profession. Reporting of CLE compliance is on the honor-system. The State Bar relies on an attorney's word when reporting compliance, especially when that attorney, like Respondent herein, reports compliance under penalty of perjury. When an attorney takes advantage of an honor-system to lie, it undermines the public's confidence in the legal profession. Thus, although Respondent did not lie to a court, his misconduct is still serious and warrants actual suspension.

In addition to an analysis of Standard 2.3, further consideration must be given to any aggravating or mitigating circumstances which may justify a greater or lesser level of discipline then indicated by Standard 2.3. In this matter, there is no aggravating circumstance but there are two mitigating circumstances. First, Respondent's 42 years of practice without prior misconduct is mitigating. Second, Respondent has cooperated with the State Bar in its investigation of this matter and entered into a stipulation that will obviate the need for a trial or any further proceedings in this matter. However, given the seriousness of Respondent's misconduct herein including the fact that Respondent falsely reported his MCLE compliance under penalty of perjury, the weight attributed to these two mitigating circumstances is limited. In sum, the appropriate level of discipline pursuant to Standard 2.3 and a consideration of the two mitigating circumstances in this matter is a 60-day actual suspension followed by a period of probation on standard terms and conditions.

#### **PENDING PROCEEDINGS.**

The disclosure date referred to, on page 2, paragraph A(7), was November 8, 2012.

#### **COSTS OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS.**

Respondent acknowledges that the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel has informed respondent that as of November 8, 2012, the prosecution costs in this matter are \$2,865.00. Respondent further acknowledges that should this stipulation be rejected or should relief from the stipulation be granted, the costs in this matter may increase due to the cost of further proceedings.

**EXCLUSION FROM MCLE CREDIT.**

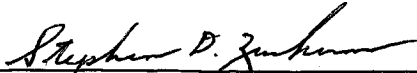
Respondent will not receive MCLE credit for the completion of State Bar Ethics School taken in compliance with the conditions of probation herein. (Rules of Procedure of the State Bar of California, rule 3201.)

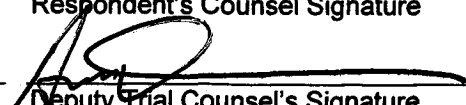
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In the Matter of: STEPHEN DOUGLAS ZUCKERMAN	Case number(s): 12-O-13220
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### SIGNATURE OF THE PARTIES

By their signatures below, the parties and their counsel, as applicable, signify their agreement with each of the recitations and each of the terms and conditions of this Stipulation Re Facts, Conclusions of Law, and Disposition.

<u>Nov 14, 2012</u>	<u></u>	<u>Stephen Douglas Zuckerman</u>
Date	Respondent's Signature	Print Name

<u>11/16/12</u>	<u></u>	<u>Ashod Mooradian</u>
Date	Deputy Trial Counsel's Signature	Print Name

(Do not write above this line.)

In the Matter of:  
STEPHEN DOUGLAS ZUCKERMAN

Case Number(s):  
12-O-13220

### ACTUAL SUSPENSION ORDER

Finding the stipulation to be fair to the parties and that it adequately protects the public, IT IS ORDERED that the requested dismissal of counts/charges, if any, is GRANTED without prejudice, and:

- ☒ The stipulated facts and disposition are APPROVED and the DISCIPLINE RECOMMENDED to the Supreme Court.
- ☐ The stipulated facts and disposition are APPROVED AS MODIFIED as set forth below, and the DISCIPLINE IS RECOMMENDED to the Supreme Court.
- ☐ All Hearing dates are vacated.

The parties are bound by the stipulation as approved unless: 1) a motion to withdraw or modify the stipulation, filed within 15 days after service of this order, is granted; or 2) this court modifies or further modifies the approved stipulation. (See rule 5.58(E) & (F), Rules of Procedure.) **The effective date of this disposition is the effective date of the Supreme Court order herein, normally 30 days after file date. (See rule 9.18(a), California Rules of Court.)**

Date

12/5/12

Judge of the State Bar Court

  
**DONALD F. MILES**

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

[Rules Proc. of State Bar; Rule 5.27(B); Code Civ. Proc., § 1013a(4)]

I am a Case Administrator of the State Bar Court of California. I am over the age of eighteen and not a party to the within proceeding. Pursuant to standard court practice, in the City and County of Los Angeles, on December 6, 2012, I deposited a true copy of the following document(s):

STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION AND  
ORDER APPROVING

in a sealed envelope for collection and mailing on that date as follows:

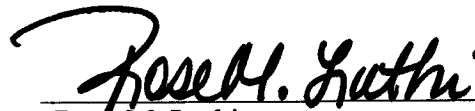
- ☒ by first-class mail, with postage thereon fully prepaid, through the United States Postal Service at Los Angeles, California, addressed as follows:

STEPHEN DOUGLAS ZUCKERMAN  
ATTORNEY AT LAW  
10390 WILSHIRE BLVD STE 1610  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90024

- ☒ by interoffice mail through a facility regularly maintained by the State Bar of California addressed as follows:

ASHOD MOORADIAN, Enforcement, Los Angeles

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in Los Angeles, California, on December 6, 2012.



Rose M. Luthi  
Case Administrator  
State Bar Court